

Muscle Strengthening at the Gym (Introduction)

(Dave Patania)

Look at all these wonderful machines.

Each one is designed to work one of your seven major muscle groups.

Some even work several groups at the same time.

Hi, I'm Dave Patania, and this is Denise. She's going to help us out today.

We're going to get you acquainted with some of the weight-training machines you can use in your local gym.

Muscle strengthening, is an important part of the Physical Activity Guidelines, but remember, you need to work all seven of these major muscle groups – those being your legs, hips, back, chest, abdominals, shoulders, and your arms – at least 2 days per week, in addition to your aerobic activity. But, of course, if you've never done this type of muscle strengthening, or if it's been a while since you have, you want to start out slow and gradually add weight or resistance.

Even if you've been doing muscle strengthening activities at home, you should start slow when beginning a routine at the gym. The idea is to gain strength and avoid injury.

Denise is going to demonstrate the safe and sensible way to use some of these machines.

What she's doing right now is demonstrating what we call a "repetition". Every time she lifts the weight and up and down it's called a "repetition". 8 to 12 repetitions is 1 set.

The Guidelines recommend that you do at least 1 set of 8 to 12 repetitions on all 7 major muscle groups 2 or more days per week. The activities that we're going to cover today are just some of the many ways you can strengthen your muscles.

Before you perform any muscle-strengthening activities, it's vital that you adjust the machine to fit your body. Usually, there are instructions, posted right on the machine, that are easily read. Use these instructions as a guide to preparing yourself and the machine for its particular use. Now, if you have any questions or doubts about how the machine works or if it's adjusted correctly, be sure to ask a qualified gym staff member.

As we go through these strengthening activities, I'll give you a few tips on how to tell if your machine is adjusted correctly. Before you do any activity, be sure to check the amount of weight set on your machine.

Now, you may want to adjust this up or down, according to what you can comfortably lift.

Choosing a starting weight will probably involve some trial and error for you. Test different amounts of weight to find the one that's right for you. Ideally, you want an amount that leaves you tired after 10 repetitions.

If 10 repetitions are too easy, increase the weight by 5 pounds until you are tired after 10 repetitions. Now, if you cannot finish 10 repetitions, the weight is too heavy and you should decrease it by 5 pounds. It may take several sessions to find the best starting weight for you.

Remember start low and go slow.